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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600
14 March 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
14 March 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation In Vietnam as of 0700 EST

The South Vietnamese Air Strike of 14 March

1. The South Vietnamese air force (VNAF) struck the Hon Gio military barracks area on Tiger Island about 1400 local Vietnam time (0100 EST) on 14 March. The target area on the island consists of a group of nine administration and storage buildings, probably housing security troops. There are no docking or wharfage facilities associated with the target. This was a secondary target of the VNAF strike; the primary target was not hit because of adverse weather conditions.

2. Pilots participating in the strike claim that six of the nine buildings were completely destroyed. No post-strike photo-reconnaissance is yet available.

3. Approximately 20 VNAF planes were in the strike force; four US Navy planes and 21 USAF F-105s flew rescue, flak suppression, and reconnaissance support for the strike. No US or VNAF aircraft were damaged, and all were recovered safely.

4. The strike aircraft were tracked by DRV radar facilities. There was no Communist air reaction to the strike. Initial pilot reports state that there was no enemy ground fire from the target area.

Communist Military Developments

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Communist Political Developments

7. No reaction to the strike has yet been noted in Communist bloc propaganda.

8. A 14 March editorial in the official Hanoi daily, Nhan Dan, stresses the necessity for internal vigilance and readiness in the face of possible future actions by the US and its "puppets." The tenor of the article appears designed to demonstrate Hanoi's resolution and determination in the face of US "aggression." The editorial claimed that many Vietnamese youth have taken part in an "emulation" campaign to join the armed forces and indicated that the term of service for some personnel has been extended as part of the same campaign.

9. Ambassador Kohler has commented on the apathy of the Soviet citizen to the Vietnamese crisis in contrast to the attention the Soviet propaganda media is giving to the subject. He cited a recent public lecture on Vietnam, which was sparsely attended principally by "old people and school girls." In addition, the ambassador also asserted that during recent trips outside of Moscow by US Embassy officers, the question of Vietnam was never mentioned by the Soviets in either official or informal talks.

10. During his farewell call on Ambassador Bohlen, Soviet ambassador Vinogradov tried to keep the conversation centered on Vietnam. He repeated several times that a continuation of hostilities only served to push the North Vietnamese toward Peiping. He reiterated the conviction

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that there could be no thought of a conference on the Vietnam situation as long as the Hanoi regime was under bombardment.

Political Developments in South Vietnam

11. Private comments by various military and political figures continue to reflect an uneasy atmosphere of mutual suspicions and intrigue. However, there is no solid evidence of action plans by any of the power elements. The Armed Forces Council is tentatively scheduled to meet this coming week to discuss various command shifts, a step which could engender new problems and friction.

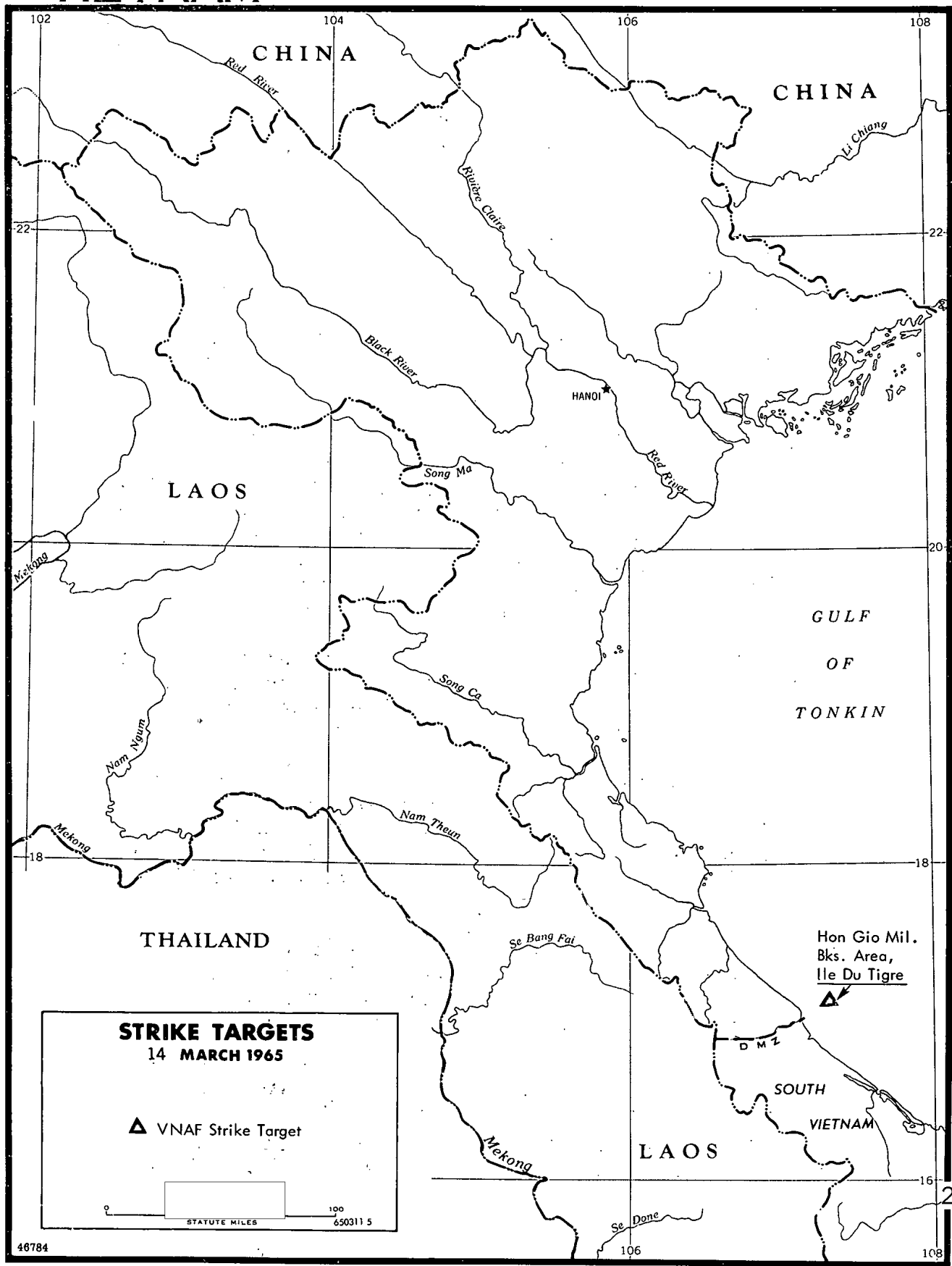
Viet Cong Military Activity

12. Viet Cong military activity continues at an undiminished level. A short but intense mortar and rifle attack yesterday on a fortified camp twenty miles west of Saigon resulted in 5 dead and 33 wounded on the government side.

13. The approximately 10-pound plastic bomb disarmed yesterday morning at a small apartment building housing US Embassy personnel in the Cholon section of Saigon was professionally fashioned and equipped with a sophisticated double timing device set for early explosion. A Vietnamese watchman discovered the device and alerted security personnel. A Vietnamese ordnance team deactivated the bomb.

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